inwardly. The stigma has from twelve to twenty four rays, very much resembling abortive anthers, at first incurved, afterwards spreading. At the centre is a solid hemispherical protuberance, usually called a nectary, but which appears to me more like the true stigma.

The roots of this plant are among the strongest astringents, and we have scarcely any native vegetable which affords more decided evidence of this property. When fresh, if chewed in the mouth, they are extremely styptic and bitter. Their decoction instantly strikes a jet black colour with sulphate of iron, and yields a dense, white precipitate to a solution of gelatin. With alcohol it deposites a slight flocculent substance resembling fæcula. Tannin and gallic acid in large quantities are to be considered its most characteristic ingredients.

The flowers have a delicious odour, hardly surpassed by any perfume which the summer produces. This fragrance is perfect only when the flowers are fresh, and, as they droop, becomes contaminated with the common smell of aquatic plants. It is peculiar in its character, and resembles that of no other plant with which I am acquainted. I have several times attempted to separate this perfume by distillation both with

water and spirit, but have never succeeded in preserving it in the faintest degree. It is much more fugacious than the perfume of roses, and seems to be destroyed by the application of heat. Possibly the employment of a large quantity of flowers at a time might yield a better product. The stamens appear more odorous than the petals, or at least preserve their odour longer in drying.

The roots of the water lily are kept by most of our apothecaries, and are much used by the common people in the composition of poultices. They are, no doubt, often injudiciously applied to suppurating tumours, since their astringency must be rather discutient, than promotive of suppuration. They are occasionally used by physicians in cases where astringent applications are called for, and answer a purpose somewhat analogous to that of lead poultices and alum curds. The roots, which, when fresh, are large and fleshy; in drying, lose a great part of their weight and size, becoming spongy and friable.

The Nymphæa alba of Europe, which appears perfectly similar in its qualities to the American plant, was celebrated by the ancients, [*Note* C.] as an antaphrodisiac, and as a remedy in dysentery and some other morbid discharges. To the

JACOB BIGELOW *American Medical Botany* BOSTON, 1817-1820 CARY GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION, ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Octavo